

HOUSE BILL NO. 116

INTRODUCED BY BARRETT

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING THAT SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN OPERATING BUDGETS AND THAT SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM TRANSFERS BE REPORTED TO THE APPROPRIATE INTERIM COMMITTEE BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION; AMENDING SECTIONS 17-7-138 AND 17-7-139, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 17-7-138, MCA, is amended to read:

"17-7-138. Operating budget. (1) (a) Expenditures by a state agency must be made in substantial compliance with the budget approved by the legislature. Substantial compliance may be determined by conformity to the conditions contained in the general appropriations act and to legislative intent as established in the narrative accompanying the general appropriations act. An explanation of any SIGNIFICANT change in agency or program scope must be submitted ON A REGULAR BASIS to the interim committee that has program evaluation and monitoring functions for the agency pursuant to Title 5, chapter 5, part 2. The explanation must be submitted prior to any implementation of the change. An explanation of any significant change in agency or program scope, objectives, activities, or expenditures must be submitted to the legislative fiscal analyst for review and comment by the legislative finance committee prior to any implementation of the change. A significant change may not conflict with a condition contained in the general appropriations act. If the approving authority certifies that a change is time-sensitive, the approving authority may approve the change prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the legislative finance committee. The approving authority shall submit all proposed time-sensitive changes to the legislative fiscal analyst prior to approval. If the legislative fiscal analyst determines that notification of the legislative finance committee is warranted, the legislative fiscal analyst shall immediately notify as many members as possible of the proposed change and communicate any concerns expressed to the approving authority. The approving authority shall present a report fully explaining the reasons for the action to the next meeting of the legislative finance committee. Except as provided in subsection (2), the expenditure of money appropriated in the general appropriations act is contingent upon approval of an operating budget by August 1 of each fiscal year. An approved original operating budget must comply with state law and

1 conditions contained in the general appropriations act.

2 (b) For the purposes of this subsection (1), an agency or program is considered to have a significant
3 change in its scope, objectives, activities, or expenditures if:

4 (i) the operating budget change exceeds \$1 million; or

5 (ii) the operating budget change exceeds 25% of a budget category and the change is greater than
6 \$25,000. If there have been other changes to the budget category in the current fiscal year, all the changes,
7 including the change under consideration, must be used in determining the 25% and \$25,000 threshold.

8 (2) The expenditure of money appropriated in the general appropriations act to the board of regents,
9 on behalf of the university system units, as defined in 17-7-102, is contingent upon approval of a comprehensive
10 operating budget by October 1 of each fiscal year. The operating budget must contain detailed revenue and
11 expenditures and anticipated fund balances of current funds, loan funds, endowment funds, and plant funds.
12 After the board of regents approves operating budgets, transfers between units may be made only with the
13 approval of the board of regents. Transfers and related justification must be submitted to the office of budget
14 and program planning and to the legislative fiscal analyst.

15 (3) The operating budget for money appropriated by the general appropriations act must be separate
16 from the operating budget for money appropriated by another law except a law appropriating money for the state
17 pay plan or any portion of the state pay plan. The legislature may restrict the use of funds appropriated for
18 personal services to allow use only for the purpose of the appropriation. Each operating budget must include
19 expenditures for each agency program, detailed at least by first-level categories as provided in 17-1-102(3).
20 Each agency shall record its operating budget for all funds, other than higher education funds, and any approved
21 changes on the statewide budget and accounting state financial system. Documents implementing approved
22 changes must be signed. The operating budget for higher education funds must be recorded on the university
23 financial system, with separate accounting categories for each source or use of state government funds. State
24 sources and university sources of funds may be combined for the general operating portion of the current
25 unrestricted funds."

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27 **Section 2.** Section 17-7-139, MCA, is amended to read:

28 **"17-7-139. Program transfers.** (1) Unless prohibited by law or a condition contained in the general
29 appropriations act, the approving authority may approve agency requests to transfer appropriations between
30 programs within each fund type within each fiscal year. The legislature may restrict the use of funds appropriated

1 for personal services to allow use only for the purpose of the appropriation. An explanation of any SIGNIFICANT
2 transfer must be submitted ON A REGULAR BASIS to the interim committee that has program evaluation and
3 monitoring functions for the agency pursuant to Title 5, chapter 5, part 2. The explanation must be submitted
4 prior to any implementation of the transfer. An explanation of any transfer that involves a significant change
5 in agency or program scope, objectives, activities, or expenditures must be submitted to the legislative fiscal
6 analyst for review and comment by the legislative finance committee prior to any implementation of the change.
7 If the approving authority certifies that a request for a transfer representing a significant change in agency or
8 program scope, objectives, activities, or expenditures is time-sensitive, the approving authority may approve the
9 transfer prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the legislative finance committee. The approving
10 authority shall submit all proposed time-sensitive changes to the legislative fiscal analyst prior to approval. If the
11 legislative fiscal analyst determines that notification of the legislative finance committee is warranted, the
12 legislative fiscal analyst shall immediately notify as many members as possible of the proposed change and
13 communicate any concerns expressed to the approving authority. The approving authority shall present a report
14 fully explaining the reasons for the action to the next meeting of the legislative finance committee. All program
15 transfers must be completed within the same fund from which the transfer originated. A request for a transfer
16 accompanied by a justification explaining the reason for the transfer must be submitted by the requesting agency
17 to the approving authority and the office of budget and program planning. Upon approval of the transfer in
18 writing, the approving authority shall inform the legislative fiscal analyst of the approved transfer and the
19 justification for the transfer. If money appropriated for a fiscal year is transferred to another fiscal year, the money
20 may not be retransferred, except that money remaining from projected costs for spring fires estimated in the last
21 quarter of the first year of a biennium may be retransferred.

22 (2) For the purposes of subsection (1), an agency or program is considered to have a significant change
23 in its scope, objectives, activities, or expenditures if:

24 (a) the budget transfer exceeds \$1 million; or

25 (b) the budget transfer exceeds 25% of a program's total operating plan and the transfer is greater than
26 \$25,000. If there have been other transfers to or from the program in the current fiscal year, all the transfers,
27 including the transfer under consideration, must be used in determining the 25% and \$25,000 threshold."

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29 **NEW SECTION. Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2005.

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